

FAQS – Oak Park Properties

Project Overview

The Oak Park Properties - encompassing 15 acres at 1700 and 1750 Oak Park Boulevard – envisions a new library building; new sports fields for the community to enjoy; a new neighborhood of 34 single-family homes; and a greatly improved Monticello Avenue as well as the adjacent section of Oak Park Boulevard.

It is a unique partnership between Contra Costa County, the principal owner of the land; the City of Pleasant Hill; the Pleasant Hill Recreation & Park District; and Mt. Diablo Unified School District, which owns a portion of 1700 Oak Park Blvd.

A July 2018 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the County, City and Recreation & Park District establishes a framework for cooperation and cost sharing on site analysis and design, as well as the transfer of five acres for free from the County to the City of Pleasant Hill for a new library building; the sale of five acres to Recreation & Park District for sports fields; and the ultimate sale by the County of 1750 Oak Park Blvd (the existing library building site) to a home builder for construction of 34 single-family homes.

All partners are sharing in the common environmental permitting review, and infrastructure design and construction costs. That includes sharing the cost of transforming Monticello Avenue from a narrow private road into a tree-lined boulevard that will better serve the nearby middle school, the new library building and sports fields, and the entire community.

The draft Environmental Impact Report for the Oak Park Properties Specific Plan was released on August 30, 2019; public comments will be accepted in writing through 5 p.m. October 15, 2019. For more information, go to <https://www.ci.pleasant-hill.ca.us/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=571>

Construction activities are expected to begin in 2020; the existing library building will close in early June 2020.

The new library building's targeted completion date is late 2021.

The City has hired Swinerton Management & Consulting to oversee construction of the library, based in part on the company's extensive record of successfully delivering similar public projects on schedule and budget.

All project partners are working together to identify available space for clubs and organizations that currently meet at the Pleasant Hill Library.

General FAQs

Why has the project timeline been extended?

During the preparation of the Environmental Impact Report, the nature and extent of the State and Federal permits required became clearer. Obtaining these permits requires additional time, which will delay the start of construction.

Library FAQs

Library Building FAQs

What is the plan for the new Pleasant Hill Community Library?

The new building for the Pleasant Hill Library is being designed by the award-winning firm Bohlin Cywinski Jackson (BCJ), with extensive community input throughout the design process. The design documents are nearing completion. Construction activities are expected to begin in 2020, with a grand opening in 2021.

The vision for the building is a place where people of all ages can explore, learn and connect. As visitors go through the entry doors, they will find an open central space to support a collection of 70,000 items, and spaces for reading, storytelling, accessing technology, collaborating and gathering. There will be a special “maker space” for hands-on creativity, and outdoor spaces for reading and play. A bookstore will showcase high-quality used books being sold by the Friends of the Pleasant Hill Library.

How will library services be provided during the interim?

Library services will be temporarily relocated to the Pleasant Hill Senior Center. While details are still being worked out, some highlights include:

- Approximately 10,000 items available for check-out at the temporary library, including DVDs and the popular “Lucky Day” collection of new books
- Access to computers
- Library staff on hand to assist with everything from book recommendations to online searches
- Storytimes or other programs at the Pleasant Hill Teen Center
- The ability to order materials from ccclib.org and pick them up at the temporary Library
- A regular column in the Outlook by Patrick Remer (Senior Community Library Manager) with news about special community events and library happenings

In addition to the temporary library, library lovers are welcome to attend programs and check out materials at any of the 25 other branches throughout Contra Costa County. For details on other library locations and programs, visit ccclib.org/locations.

The County owns the current library building, but the City of Pleasant Hill will own the new one. Why?

Only seven of the 26 Contra Costa County Library buildings are owned by the County, including the current Pleasant Hill building. The remaining libraries are owned by the city or town in which they are located or leased from a school or private entity. Contra Costa County Library partners with the cities and towns to fund operational costs. As part of the Oak Park Properties project, the County will transfer five acres of land for free to the City of Pleasant Hill upon which to build the new library building. The City is paying for construction of the new building.

How is the new library building being paid for?

The new library building is being paid for with Measure K funds, a ½ cent sales tax approved by Pleasant Hill voters in 2016 for the construction of a new City-owned library building, as well as the enhancement of City streets, storm drain facilities, and bike/pedestrian facilities.

When Measure K was approved, the building site had not been determined. The location for the new library building was formally identified in the July 2018 MOU between the County, Recreation & Park District, and City.

Why is the current library building closing before the new library building is open?

The current library is closing at the end of the 2019/20 school year so that the property can be prepared for the future housing development.

The plan was always to start construction activities for the houses as soon as possible.

Originally, the houses were going to be built on five acres to the north of the library, and the sports fields/park was going to be built on the site of the existing library building at a later point in time. Under that scenario, through an agreement with Pleasant Hill Recreation and Park District, library services would have continued at 1750 Oak Park Boulevard until the new library building was complete.

Upon further analysis, the project partners realized that the better configuration was to flip the sports fields/park with the homes, thus building the new neighborhood on the parcel where the current library sits.

Having the library and the sports fields next to each other:

- Creates a single civic space for the public to enjoy
- Allows additional preservation of the riparian habitat along the creek
- Provides the opportunity for more efficient shared parking between the library and the park

What about the Pleasant Hill Middle School students who currently go to the library after school?

Project partners are working with Pleasant Hill Middle School leaders to make sure parents are aware that the current library building will be torn down shortly after the end of the 2019/20 school year.

The Teen Center at Pleasant Hill Park on Gregory has a shuttle bus from Pleasant Hill Middle School. While there is a nominal fee, those with financial needs may access the district's scholarship program for reduced fees. Check out the website to learn more: <https://www.pleasanthillrec.com/246/Teen-After-School-Program>

What will happen with the Friends of the Pleasant Hill Library?

The Friends of the Pleasant Hill Library is a volunteer-based non-profit and valued partner, raising more than \$75,000 a year to supplement library programs and other library-related needs through their sales of gently used books. The City is working with the Friends to find a temporary location for their operations.

Park/Sports Fields FAQs

The Recreation & Park District is the lead agency for the new park/sports fields, which will be built on 5 acres north of the new library. Initial park conceptual designs feature two baseball/softball fields with overlapping soccer fields, bocce courts and a Creekside walking trail.

New Homes (Oak Park Residential) FAQs

What is the plan for new homes?

The County is working with a team to secure land use approvals for 34 single-family homes to be built at 1750 Oak Park on the site of the existing library. If approved, the County will sell the land to an experienced home builder for future development.

The County and its development team have established a website to keep the public informed on the proposal. It can be found at <https://www.oakparkblvdresidential.com>.

Important Documents

Oak Park Properties Strategic Plan Amendment – Adopted by the Contra Costa Board of Supervisors in July 2018. <https://www.ci.pleasant-hill.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/18052/Oak-Park-Properties-Strategic-Plan---CC-County---2018>

Draft Environmental Impact Report and associated documents – released August 30, 2019. <https://www.ci.pleasant-hill.ca.us/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=571>

Latest update

September 2019 – Draft EIR released on Aug. 30, 2019